

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ANKARA 05135 140325Z
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S E C R E T ANKARA 5135

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, MOPS, TU, UR
SUBJ: SOVIET OVERFLIGHTS OF TURKEY

REF: (A) STATE 173864, (B) BONN 12512

1. REGARDING CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S COMMENTS ON SOVIET OVERFLIGHTS OF TURKEY, WE WOULD TAKE ISSUE WITH HIS CHOICE OF WORDS, THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY WITH HIS ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION. TURKISH AIRSPACE IS NOT BEING "VIOLATED SYSTEMATICALLY" BY THE SOVIET UNION. RATHER, DURING THE PAST YEAR THE TURKS HAVE PERMITTED A MASSIVE SOVIET AIRLIFT OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT THROUGH TURKISH AIRSPACE TO IRAQ, AND FROM THERE DOWN THE PERSIAN GULF TO SOUTH YEMEN AND ON THE ETHIOPIA.

2. WE BELIEVE THAT SECTION III OF THE MONTREUX CONVENTION REGARDING THE "PASSAGE OF CIVIL AIRCRAFT BEYWWWN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE BLACK SEA" PROVIDES TURKEY WITH ADEQUATE LEGAL GROUNDS TO HAVE OBJECTED TO AND RESTRICTED THIS TRAFFIC. DURING THE HEIGHT OF THIS AIRLIFT (NOVEMBER, 1977 TO EARLY JANUARY, 1978), IT WAS GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD THAT THE CARGO WAS MILITARY EQUIP-
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MENT AND SUPPLIES, EVEN THOUGH THE SOVIETS ROUTINELY DECLARE ALL SUCH FLIGHTS AS CIVILIAN.

3. DETAILED INFORMATION REGARDING THE CURRENT OVER-FLIGHT SITUATION IS AVAILABLE IN WASHINGTON, THOUGH WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THESE FLIGHTS HAVE, SINCE JANUARY, RESUMED A MORE ROUTINE CHARACTER.

WE ALSO ASSUME THAT WASHINGTON AGENCIES WOULD HAVE
A BETTER CAPABILITY OF ASSESSING THE EXTENT TO WHICH
THE SOVIETS EMPLOYED AN ALTERNATE SUPPLY ROUTE THROUGH
YUGOSLAVIA AND LIBYA DURING THE DECEMBER-JANUARY
PERIOD, AND WHETHER THIS MAY HAVE OCCURRED AS A RESULT
OF REPORTED TURKISH COMPLAINTS TO THE USSR THAT
OVERFLIGHT PRIVILEGES WERE BEING ABUSED.
DILLON

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